

I would like to thank the commission for allowing me to file these comments. In the amateur radio community this topic of morse code testing has polarized amateur radio operators into two very passionate camps. Those that oppose morse code testing feel that they should not be forced to learn a skill that they feel they will never use and have no interest in. They have stated that they feel they are being kept out of the full amateur experience by being denied HF privileges because of the element 1 testing. Those that are in favor of keeping element 1 as a testing requirement feel that morse code is something that separates amateur radio from all other licensed and unlicensed radio services. They also feel that other modes are tested for on the written test but the only way to prove knowledge of morse code is to keep element 1 as a testing element. With the changes at WRC 2003 it is now up to the commission to decide if morse testing will be required for HF privileges. I am afraid that with the emotions involved with this topic there will be no winners. If the code requirement is dropped I don't expect to see a large influx of new amateur radio licensees. With the last restructuring of amateur radio we saw a lot of movement within the amateur ranks in upgrading licenses but not a great rush by those without licenses to join amateur radio. The entry requirements for obtaining a license are low enough, even with element 1 required, that those who are truly interested in joining our ranks have already done so. Lowering the requirements will not attract the attention of the youth that the no code testing group expects. The competition for their time by other interests is too great. This is not only a problem for amateur radio but other groups as well. Youth groups such as scouting are having trouble attracting youth too. I can say that the code kept me out of amateur radio for 30 plus years. I am saddened by the fact that I missed out on all the fun I have had over the past 6 years in those lost years. For me to join amateur radio, it took one simple decision. I simply said I would and could do whatever was required to obtain my license. No complaining about the testing elements being unfair or being too hard, just a dedication to what was needed to reach a goal. I would like the commission to stay the course and keep the amateur radio testing structure as it is. If it is the commissions desire to restructure amateur radio again I would hope that a place could be found for morse code testing at some level of licensing and that all privileges be earned by passing the required elements.

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